

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION IN SPACE LIFE SCIENCES

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Competitive summer internships in space life sciences at NASA are awarded to college students every summer. Each student is aligned with a NASA mentor and project that match his or her skills and interests, working on individual projects in ongoing research activities. The interns consist of undergraduate, graduate, and medical students in various majors and disciplines from across the United States. To augment their internship experience, students participate in the Space Life Sciences Summer Institute (SLSSI). The purpose of the Institute is to offer a unique learning environment that focuses on the current biomedical issues associated with human spaceflight; providing an introduction of the paradigms, problems, and technologies of modern spaceflight cast within the framework of life sciences. The Institute faculty includes NASA scientists, physicians, flight controllers, engineers, managers, and astronauts; and fosters a multi-disciplinary science approach to learning with a particular emphasis on stimulating experimental creativity and innovation within an operational environment. This program brings together scientists and students to discuss cutting-edge solutions to problems in space physiology, environmental health, and medicine; and provides a familiarization of the various aspects of space physiology and environments. In addition to the lecture series, behind-the-scenes tours are offered that include the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, Mission Control Center, space vehicle training mockups, and a hands-on demonstration of the Space Shuttle Advanced Crew Escape Suit. While the SLSSI is managed and operated at the Johnson Space Center in Texas, student interns from the other NASA centers (Glenn and Ames Research Centers, in Ohio and California) also participate through webcast distance learning capabilities.